



HM Government

# Gender equality at every stage: a roadmap for change

[gov.uk/geo](https://www.gov.uk/geo)



The background features a teal circle on the left and a light green circle on the right, both overlapping a central white circle. The text is positioned within the white circle.

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**The Government is committed to making the UK a country where everyone can reach their full potential.**

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# Foreword



**The Rt Hon Penny  
Mordaunt MP**

Minister for Women  
and Equalities

In the UK today women are, on average, more likely to enter the workforce with higher qualifications than men, but earn less per hour. They are more likely to take on unpaid work, three times as likely to be working part time and likely to save less into their private pensions.

It's clear that we as Government need to act, following through on our commitment to ensure everyone in this country can reach their true potential. Business as usual isn't going to cut it. That is why I am publishing this roadmap, setting out the actions we will take now, and in the future, to tackle these issues.

I want to ensure that every woman in the UK has the freedom, choice and capacity to do whatever she wants to do. Our work does that by breaking down how inequalities accumulate throughout women and men's lives, often through making seemingly innocuous decisions, and offering solutions.

Evidence suggests that from the moment they are born, boys and girls are treated differently, potentially influencing subject choices in education and career aspirations. Women generally go on to work in lower-paid jobs and take more time out to care for both children and others. In turn, this results in slower career progression, a gender pay gap and lower pensions wealth. Men can also find themselves limited by old fashioned perceptions, particularly around spending time with their children and families.

I am proud that we have already introduced shared parental leave, mandatory gender pay gap reporting and an ambitious strategy to tackle violence against women and girls. This next step builds on that good work, complementing our other strategies which seek to meet the future challenges of the UK labour market, boost productivity, and build strong integrated communities.

This roadmap sets out the work which is already underway, new measures and our commitment to delivering a longer-term change. This is not a closed, final statement of the Government's position on gender equality. Indeed, our approach will need to evolve as we increase our knowledge base. That is why I am announcing a number of new research projects, and have published the first release of the annual Gender Equality Monitor alongside this roadmap.

Promoting gender equality for all is firmly in our national interest and I am determined to keep this vital issue at the top of the agenda. Getting this right is key to shaping our shared future when no one is limited, except by their talents and the ambitions they have. This work is an important step forward in creating a fairer society where everyone can reach their full potential, and consequently our nation to.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Mordaunt'.



# Introduction

Your gender should not define or limit the choices you make about what you study, where you work, your career ambitions and how you care for others.

This roadmap sets out our vision to enable everyone to contribute to the country's economy and balance caring responsibilities with a rewarding career.

£55bn

Reducing gender gaps in labour market participation, Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) qualifications and wages, could increase the size of the UK economy by around 2% or £55 billion by 2030<sup>2</sup>

Promoting gender equality is about shaping our shared future and is firmly in our national interest. It is important for:

**society:** creating real choice and opportunity in every aspect of life;

**individuals:** removing limiting beliefs on career and life choices;

**employers:** companies in the top 25% for gender diversity on their executive team were 21% more likely to experience above-average profitability than companies in the bottom 25%<sup>1</sup>;

**the economy:** reducing gender gaps in labour market participation, Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) qualifications and wages, could increase the size of the UK economy by around 2% or £55 billion by 2030<sup>2</sup>; and,

**well-being:** increasing job quality and raising incomes – particularly at the lower end – has the potential to improve average national well-being<sup>3</sup>.

This roadmap pays particular attention to the inequalities faced by women, as this is where there is the greatest need for action. Compared to men, despite doing better in education<sup>4</sup>; women are over three times more likely to work part time<sup>5</sup>; are less likely to progress in work<sup>6</sup>; generally work in lower paying industries and occupations<sup>6</sup>; and have lower pensions wealth<sup>7</sup>.

We recognise that other protected characteristics, socio-economic disadvantage and/or geographical location can combine with gendered inequalities to create multiple disadvantages. Where we have good evidence of these additional barriers, we have reflected this in corresponding actions. However, we need to keep building the evidence base to understand how we can go further, including through annual monitoring of gender equality data and working more closely with the Race Disparity Unit. In the future, we will focus on how we can do more for other disadvantaged groups and those facing multiple disadvantages.

## Why do we need to act?

The decisions that people make throughout their lives about work and care can have a huge cumulative effect across their lifetime, with women ending up much worse off financially than men. We have set out below the eight key drivers of inequality that we want to address and the actions we will take to tackle them.

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**Despite doing better in education; women are over three times more likely to work part time; are less likely to progress in work; generally work in lower paying industries and occupations; and have lower pensions wealth**  
 ”

# Understanding the Gender Pay Gap

## Gender norms emerge at a very young age...

At ages 7 to 11, boys are almost twice as likely as girls to want to be scientists<sup>1</sup>.

57% of girls aged 7 to 10 think girls are better at doing chores at home than boys<sup>2</sup>.

## ... but these differences aren't about ability.

Girls tend to outperform boys in STEM subjects at GCSE<sup>3</sup>. Despite this, male students are almost twice as likely to take maths at A Level, over four times more likely to take physics and over eight times more likely to take computer science<sup>4</sup>.

Women aged 17 to 19 are over three times as likely to have an anxiety disorder as men of the same age<sup>5</sup>.

On average, women enter the labour market with higher qualifications than men<sup>6</sup> – but earn less per hour from the start<sup>7</sup>.

Women tend to work in lower paid sectors and lower paid roles. For example: almost two thirds of retail assistants are women, while the majority of retail managers and directors are men<sup>8</sup>.



.....  
**These differences add up over the life course: because women earn less, they save less.**

.....  
**Women are over three times more likely to work part-time than men<sup>12</sup>.**

Jobs available part-time tend to be less well paid with fewer opportunities for progression.<sup>13</sup>

Women aged 55 to 64 are almost 20% less likely to have a private pension, and those who do have almost 40% less wealth held in them<sup>14</sup>.

.....  
**The pay gap increases sharply at the point couples have children<sup>9</sup>.**

By the time their first child is aged 12, mothers' average hourly wages are a third below fathers<sup>9</sup>.

.....  
Women take on more unpaid work than men, which affects their labour market participation. Women make up the majority of informal carers in the UK<sup>10</sup>.

Women also do the majority of unpaid work in the UK, such as cooking, cleaning and caring – on average around 60% more than that undertaken by men<sup>11</sup>.

**11.3%**

30–39

**23.4%**

40–49

**25.9%**

50–59



# Eight key drivers of inequality

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**On average, girls outperform boys within education, but fare worse in the labour market**  
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## 1. Limiting attitudes to gender can hold women and men back across their lives

On average, girls outperform boys within education<sup>8</sup>, but fare worse in the labour market. This is partly because children's career aspirations are shaped and restricted by gender stereotyping that sets in at an early age. They associate certain fields and roles with a particular gender, and adjust their aspirations based on gendered perceptions of ability.

67% of girls aged 11–21 think that women do not have the same chances as men<sup>9</sup>. Girls are far less likely to continue studying STEM qualifications – for example in 2017/18 only 22% of A-level physics students were girls<sup>10</sup> and just 9% of those starting STEM apprenticeships were female<sup>11</sup>. Not capitalising on this talent in the economy can hold back progress on both the gender pay gap and overall productivity<sup>12</sup>.

Social norms also have an impact on men and boys – expectations about masculinity reinforce gender roles around work and care, can have a negative effect on men’s social and mental wellbeing and quality of life, and sometimes contribute to an environment within which violence and sexual harassment can occur.

The advertising industry can be hugely influential in promoting our social values and norms. It holds a unique position in being able to challenge outdated stereotypes that limit individual potential, and gender portrayals can be a key factor in promoting gender equality. Whilst we recognise that the industry is taking action to combat these issues, more could be done to understand the extent of the problem. Evidence suggests that gender stereotypes can lead to mental, physical and social harm, and can limit the potential of groups and individuals<sup>13</sup>. In a recent UK Girlguiding survey, 95% of girls aged 11–21 said that the advertising industry should make sure adverts show more positive, diverse representations of girls and women<sup>14</sup>.

These norms can hold us all back, limiting aspiration, opportunity and potential.

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## 2. Women tend to work in lower paid sectors and occupations, and are less likely to progress

Women face particular challenges when it comes to pay and progression. Women are 50% more likely than men to work in low paying jobs<sup>15</sup> and 20% more likely than men to be stuck in such jobs for over ten years<sup>16</sup>.

Gender segregation by type of sector and type of occupation accounts for

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**Women are 50% more likely than men to work in low paying jobs<sup>15</sup> and 20% more likely than men to be stuck in such jobs<sup>16</sup>**  
 ”

35% of the UK’s gender pay gap<sup>17</sup>. Even in the industries where high numbers of women work, men are still more likely to occupy more senior positions. For example, in secondary schools, women make up only 38% of head teachers, despite representing 63% of the teacher workforce<sup>18</sup>. Women are also more likely to work in lower paid occupations such as administration, caring and secretarial roles, across all sectors<sup>19</sup>.

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## 3. The working age benefits system hasn’t always tackled the disadvantages that women and those with caring responsibilities face

The legacy system, six different benefits administered by three different organisations, is complicated. This creates an extra burden for those with caring responsibilities. Within the legacy system, there are £2.4 billion of unclaimed benefits not taken up by people who need them, including women and those with caring responsibilities<sup>20</sup>.

We anticipate a further 700,000 households will get entitlements they were not claiming under the legacy system, worth on average £285 per month, as Universal Credit is a more accurate system and will ensure people will receive the right entitlement.

#### 4. Women take more time out of the labour market to care for children

Having a child has a substantial impact on women's economic outcomes<sup>21</sup>. Taking time out of work or limiting work hours, often for caring, can have a big impact on pay and progression: differences in labour market participation between women and men are the biggest single driver of the gender pay gap, at 40%<sup>22</sup>. Of those who are economically inactive due to caring for their home or family, around 90% are women<sup>23</sup>.

Decisions around who does the most caring are often made based on the current circumstances for a couple, given their individual earnings and employee benefits on offer; but may not take into account the long-term financial impacts of one person taking significant time out of work.

#### 5. Women are providing more informal care and unpaid work for others

ONS estimates the value of unpaid childcare and adult care to the economy at £411 billion per year<sup>24</sup>. Almost one in four (24%) older female workers have caring responsibilities, compared with just over one in eight (13%) older male workers<sup>25</sup>.

**£411bn**

**Estimated value of unpaid care to the economy per year.**

We know that unpaid care work, including childcare<sup>26</sup> and informal care, for example caring for sick relatives, friends or neighbours, is disproportionately performed by women<sup>27</sup>. This has an impact on their labour market participation and progression and reinforces norms that women do the caring.

#### 6. Some women face barriers returning to or entering the labour market

For those who have taken time out of work for care, it can be hard to return to work at a level equivalent to their skills. There are 1.2 million potential returners in the UK, 91% of whom are women<sup>28</sup>.

Certain women face additional barriers to accessing and remaining in the labour market. For example, in the 2011 census, over 350,000 working-age women in England stated that they were unable to speak English well or at all<sup>29</sup>. This represents huge untapped talent.



## 7. Women are more likely to face financial instability later in life, due to decisions taken throughout working life

The gender pay gap increases with age, as successive decisions about work and care by individuals cumulate<sup>30</sup>. Women also live longer than men, but historic differences in labour market participation mean that women aged 55 to 64 are almost 20% less likely to have a private pension, and those who do have almost 40% less wealth held in it<sup>31</sup>. In their first year of retirement, men are projected to have around a 25% higher income on average than women<sup>32</sup>. And of the 1.7 million people who are financially struggling in retirement, 70% are women<sup>33</sup>.

Only 36% of financial remedy disposals (the means by which assets are shared after separation) issued in 2017 included a pensions sharing or attachment order<sup>34</sup> and there is no legal obligation to disclose financial assets unless a financial application is made to the court.

## 8. We need to ensure that we sustain strong foundations for the future

We already have a good foundation in the UK to support and promote economic empowerment for all: a comprehensive legislative framework to protect against discrimination and promote equality; high employment rates for men and women; a free at the point of access National Health Service; a first-rate education system; and high life expectancy. We are also taking action to improve workplaces through the Taylor Review of Modern Employment Practices, Good Work Plan and Industrial Strategy.

However, this roadmap sets out how persistent gender inequality builds throughout a woman's life, resulting in slower progression, a gender pay gap

and lower private pensions wealth. Despite having a strong legal framework, 20% of mothers said they experienced harassment or negative comments related to pregnancy or flexible working from their employer/colleagues<sup>35</sup>. Unobserved factors account for 25% of the UK gender pay gap<sup>36</sup>: this is likely to include things such as discrimination; bullying and harassment or bias; social norms and gendered attitudes.

To tackle the discrimination, violence and health inequalities that women continue to face, we must ensure that our public services are fit for purpose and are alive to the needs of different genders. We know that domestic abuse, sexual violence and other forms of inter-personal violence and abuse disproportionately affect women and girls, which is why our response is framed within the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. From the Crime Survey of England and Wales, we know that 1 in 4 women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime, and 1 in 5 will experience sexual violence<sup>37</sup>. Earlier this year, we published data on the costs of domestic abuse, which found that, for victims in 2016/17, domestic abuse cost society over £66bn, of which over £14bn was from lost economic output<sup>38</sup>.

Up to 47% of the UK workforce – i.e. all female workers – will experience menopause transition during their working lives<sup>39</sup> but we have limited evidence as to how this affects them in the workplace.

We need to meet today's challenges and those of the future, to keep pace with our evolving society; for example, the ONS estimates that around 1.5 million jobs in the UK are currently at high risk of automation<sup>40</sup>. Ensuring everyone can make the most of their talents and opportunities will enable us to thrive, individually and collectively against this backdrop of fast-paced change.

70%

Of the 1.7 million people who are financially struggling in retirement, 70% are women

20%

20% of mothers said they experienced harassment or negative comments related to pregnancy or flexible working



# The Government will act on these eight key issues

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## 1. Tackling limiting attitudes to gender

We want a society where children and adults are not limited in their choices, opportunities or success by expectations and perceptions about gender.

**We will deepen the evidence base around the root causes of gendered aspirations and attitudes;** and explore what works to improve the gender balance of education outcomes (for girls and boys) by piloting different approaches in schools and early years programmes.

We will provide improved advice and support in schools, including **challenging gender stereotypes**, so that everyone can make the most of their skills and talents. Through the Careers & Enterprise Company, we are investing £2 million in developing and extending career-related learning in primary schools to help children keep their horizons broad and the doors open.

**We have invested in programmes to increase participation in STEM subjects**, particularly for girls, including behavioural insights trials to test interventions for girls' uptake of STEM A levels. These trials will help us understand and develop the evidence base for what works to tackle barriers for girls' progression into STEM and ensure action is effective. We are also working with those in the engineering industry to address how they might work better together to increase the number and diversity of those entering engineering careers<sup>i</sup>.

**We will deliver a programme of work later this year to tackle stereotyping in media and advertising**, including:

- The creation of a barometer to measure the prevalence of harmful gender stereotypes in UK advertising. This will help provide insight and if necessary drive further change to support the recent introduction by the Advertising Standards Authority of a rule in the Advertising Codes aimed at eradicating harmful gender stereotypes in adverts.
- Further research on non-stereotypical advertising to examine the links between gendered content, consumer response and brand loyalty.
- Supporting current industry initiatives that recognise industry leaders who are promoting gender diversity in their work.

**We will publish research and tools to tackle poor body image** that can have a detrimental effect on an individual's confidence and career aspirations. We will also partner with key influencers and community leaders to promote body diversity and confidence through targeted public awareness campaigns.

**We will publish research and practical advice on what works to engage men and boys on gender issues** and how best to tackle gender stereotypes in relationships, work and wider communities. We will use these findings to inform the work of policy experts, educators, community influencers and advocates working to promote positive masculinities.

<sup>i</sup> Education policy is devolved and these apply to England only



## 2. Women tend to work in lower paid sectors and occupations, and are less likely to progress

We want a better gender balance across higher and lower paid industries and occupations. We want to help women enter the labour market, be empowered to stay on and progress at work at an equal rate to men, and go as far as their talents and ambition can take them.

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**We need action at a sector level to close the gender pay gap**  
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**We need action at a sector level to close the gender pay gap, as well as actions by individual employers.**

Work is already underway in some sectors, including the independent review of the gender pay gap in medicine, work to improve progression of the female workforce in schools, the Women in Finance Charter, the Tech Talent Charter and work with the British Retail Consortium.

We want to build on and accelerate this by working with all sectors to mainstream gender equality in wider sector strategies and/or develop tailored actions and gender initiatives for different workforces. We will prioritise high-profile sectors that have large numbers of women, are fast-growing or are strongly associated with one gender, including health, education, retail, financial services, construction, engineering, and digital and technology.

**We are actively reviewing the gender pay gap reporting metrics**

to assess their effectiveness in exposing the causes of the pay gap in individual organisations as well as demonstrating employers’ progress in tackling them. We will use this evidence to update the reporting legislation, consulting on any proposed changes by 2021.

**We will enhance the service for employers reporting their data on the online gender pay gap reporting service** and ensure the information is presented in a user-friendly way to help people understand the data. We will consider what additional information employers can and should upload to increase transparency about policies and initiatives to support gender equality, for example their family friendly policies or retention rates of employees returning from parental leave. We will also align with other transparency asks of employers, to maximise efficiency across government.

**We will launch a national campaign for employers**, to be developed with key professional bodies, empowering employers to understand how to help employees balance work and care and support progression to advance gender equality in the workplace. This will be based on our world-leading research programmes and sit alongside our latest evidence-based guidance for employers.

It will cover actions to tackle gender pay gaps; how to build a supportive and inclusive workplace for all staff, including pregnant women, new parents, those with disabilities and other particular needs; and how to effectively engage with schemes such as Carer Confident<sup>ii</sup> and Disability Confident that are designed to give employers the information and skills they need to support staff. We will update our key guidance, Actions for Employers, later this year, supported by new implementation guides for HR practitioners on what works to support gender equality in the workplace.

**Following the success of the Women's Business Council in promoting business-led solutions to maximise women's economic potential<sup>41</sup>**, the Council will refresh its focus. With a new Chair, Fiona Dawson, and refreshed membership it will play a leading role in promoting best practice activity to close the gender pay gap, working with sectors facing the biggest issues. The council will look to collaborate with local partners and business organisations to:

- Encourage local initiatives to drive action to tackle the gender pay gap at a local or regional level, and take a national role in sharing good practice, for example organisations offering quality flexible working across all roles, enhanced parental leave policies for men and women, and effective mentoring programmes.
- Help to develop and implement tailored actions to tackle the gender pay gap in target sectors;
- Drawing on the expertise of the new members to work with industry leaders in sectors with high numbers of low paid roles, which tend to be female dominated, to support women in low paid roles to progress;
- Encourage large organisations to work through their supply chains to disseminate best practice, for example through creating opportunities for returners; and
- Advise the Government on issues facing particular sectors of the economy and barriers to women's economic participation.

**We will launch a national campaign for employers, to advance gender equality in the workplace**

<sup>ii</sup> Or Carer Positive in Scotland

**We will extend and expand our Workplace and Gender Equality research** programme to translate the latest innovative research by leading academics into practical evidence-based advice for employers. This programme has already considered important issues such as family friendly policies, women's progression in the workplace and women in low paid low skilled roles.

The next theme will explore gender norms and sexual harassment in the workplace to help us tackle culture that leads to bullying, harassment and discrimination and promote workplaces where everyone can reach their potential, regardless of their gender.

We will publish the latest research to support employers on some of these areas in the Autumn and will build on this to look at other key issues including intersectionality; the future of work – including big data, artificial intelligence and automation; and SMEs and self-employment.

**The Gender and Behavioural Insights programme in partnership with the Behavioural Insights Team will continue to develop and test cutting edge behavioural interventions** that improve gender equality in the workplace through ground-breaking real world trials and partnerships, including an actions for employers toolkit which will be published later this year.



### **3. The working age benefits system hasn't always tackled the disadvantages that women and those with caring responsibilities face**

We want Universal Credit to work for women, supporting them into quality jobs equal to their skills, with no perverse incentives in the system. We want to ensure that Universal Credit is rolled out as soon as possible so that people who are currently on legacy benefits can access the additional advantages it offers. Among its advantages, Universal Credit will scrap the 16-hour cliff edge experienced under the legacy system which led to people being trapped on a certain number of working hours and is one reason why women on low pay are often still in low pay years later.

**We will continue to take forward measures to make Universal Credit work better for women**, including building Work Coaches' capability to help claimants to progress by making sound decisions about job switching, and boosting the capability of employer-facing staff to have effective conversations with local employers about progression and good quality flexible working. This also includes supporting women in low-paid self-employment or multiple, mini-jobs to increase their earnings.

**We want to see women on Universal Credit progress from low paying jobs** and are developing a programme of research, analysis and trials to better understand the barriers our future in-work claimants face and what works to address these barriers. We will commence work to better understand the decisions that couples make around earnings, and the behaviours and motivations behind that.

**We are committed to ensuring that affordable childcare should not be a barrier to women moving into and progressing in work.** We have made changes to align the Flexible Support Fund guidance more closely with Universal Credit and work coaches are promoting the use of the Fund for eligible claimants needing help with upfront costs to take up employment. We have successfully trialled greater flexibility around late reporting of Universal Credit childcare costs and are working to implement this nationally later in the summer. Significant work continues on increasing work coach understanding and promotion of both the Universal Credit childcare offer and the wider Government childcare offer.

**We won't close gender gaps in paid work unless we start to tackle gaps in who does unpaid work**



.....  
**£6bn**

The government will be spending almost £6 billion a year on childcare support by 2019–20  
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#### **4. Women take more time out of the labour market to care for children**

We want: both parents to take active and well-informed choices about balancing work and care, supported by a fair and clear government offer; employers to create inclusive workplaces fit for the future – showing equal consideration of work-life balance for all employees and facilitating flexible working to retain staff; and infants to reap the known benefits of spending time with both parents (where they have the opportunity to do so).

**We are committed to giving parents choice about how they manage work and parenting responsibilities** and to challenging existing expectations of who does the caring for children. We also recognise that we won't close gender gaps in paid work unless we start to tackle gaps in who does unpaid work.

One part of achieving this is a parental leave system that balances the gender division of parental leave. We are currently undertaking an evaluation of the Shared Parental Leave and Pay schemes, which will complete by end 2019. This will support the evidence base to allow us to make an assessment of the effectiveness of the current policy, and consider next steps on modernising the existing system.

**We will consider how to improve access to the information parents want and need**, joining up information on: childcare support; parental leave; family friendly employment policies; and other relevant services and support available for new parents. This work will reflect the launch of a Shared Parental Leave digital tool later this year to help parents understand the parental leave options available to them. This will better support parents to make informed decisions on how best to balance the challenges of both working and raising a family.

**The government will be spending almost £6 billion a year on childcare support by 2019–20<sup>iii</sup>.**

We will continue to ensure that the significant existing investment the government makes in childcare supports female economic empowerment, as well as the government's wider objectives of supporting families with their cost of living and child development. We will continue to consider ways of making the government's overall childcare offer more accessible for parents, providers and Work Coaches.

**We will consult on increasing the transparency of organisations' parental leave and pay policies** and on improving the availability of flexible working in job adverts.

We will continue to celebrate employers such as Diageo, UBS and Norton Rose Fulbright who uplift their Shared Parental Leave offer beyond the statutory rate – we encourage all employers to do this where possible. We will provide effective evidence-based support for employers in delivering user-friendly parental leave

policies, for example by working with others to deliver model policies to help employers understand how they might put SPL into practice.

**To support employers to provide quality flexible working for all**, we will explore developing innovative pilots to deliver more flexible working in SMEs and in sectors with high numbers of low paid employees.

## 5. Women are providing more informal care and unpaid work for others

We want everyone who is providing informal care to be able to make informed decisions about combining work and care before they reach a crisis point, including the implications of those options for their longer-term employment, finances and wellbeing. We want those who take on caring activities to be able to remain in the labour market, claim the benefits and support they are entitled to, and to be recognised for the contributions they make at work and in their caring role.

<sup>iii</sup> Tax Free Childcare is UK wide, support for childcare costs in Universal Credit is UK wide, 30 hours free childcare offer for 3 and 4 year olds is England only and 15 hours free childcare for disadvantaged 2 year olds is England only



**We will work with a range of cross-sector stakeholders**, including charities, the Money and Pensions Service and the NHS to improve the signposting, clarity and consistency of information carers receive about their rights and entitlements to empower them to make the best decisions for them about if and how to combine work and care. Following the Carers' Employment Digital Discovery Project, we expect to provide further details about the proposals and plans of action alongside the discovery findings in the Autumn.

**We will consult on dedicated employment rights for carers**, such as looking at carer's leave.

**We are working with employers to improve their offer to carers** looking to balance work and care, by helping carers to identify and consider their needs and to plan accordingly for their own career and financial security in later life.

**We launched the Carers Innovation Fund on 12 June** to provide funding for projects that will develop creative and innovative solutions and models to provide effective support to carers, including increasing their ability to juggle their work and caring responsibilities<sup>iv</sup>.

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## **6. Helping people to return to work after taking time out for caring**

We want more women to enter and return to the labour market, supported to up-skill or re-train if needed, and employers to recognise the value of these workers.

**We announced in June the recipients of round 3 of the Returners Grant Fund**, supporting women who are especially vulnerable to return to work, for example those with complex needs or multiple barriers such as substance abuse or homelessness.



<sup>iv</sup> The Carers Innovation Fund applies to England only. Much of the support for unpaid carers is devolved.

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**We are introducing a  
 new voluntary Investing  
 in Women Code**  
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**Having run three rounds of grant funding for returner schemes** in the private sector, established or piloted five schemes in the public sector, and built the evidence base over the past two years, we will embed and disseminate this learning more widely.

We will work with local partners and through Jobcentre Plus to help potential returners identify opportunities; support SMEs to offer and promote returner opportunities; and develop and identify best practice around apprenticeships and re-skilling for older workers, including flexibly and on a part-time basis. This will also ensure that people who have taken time out for caring can return to work, including the most disadvantaged women who can speak little or no English.

**We will work with employers in sectors with the largest gender imbalances**, to understand and share effective measures to overcome gender disparities in apprenticeships. We will develop and improve our guidance to apprentices and rules to direct employers and providers, ensuring appropriate action is taken to support apprentices who become pregnant. We will identify and raise awareness of good practice in the delivery of flexible and part-time options for apprenticeships or those with caring responsibilities.

## 7. Women are more likely to face financial instability later in life

We want to tackle the structural inequalities in the labour market that lead to the private pensions gap and to empower people to take informed decisions about saving across their life course so that women do not bear the financial brunt of caring.

**We will work with the Money and Pensions Service** to deliver a comprehensive engagement exercise to explore what works to improve women's financial outcomes and inform the National Financial Capability Strategy to improve financial capability across the UK.

**We will update the online divorce process** to include a behavioural nudge and improved guidance to ensure that couples are aware of and can consider the benefits of pensions sharing.

**We will build on the success of Automatic Enrolment** in equalising men and women's participation rates in workplace pension schemes, which will, in the long-term, ensure that labour market changes have a positive impact on private pension saving.

We will also continue to monitor the impact of recent private pensions reforms on women and consider whether there is a need to look more closely and comprehensively at the private pensions outcomes experienced by women and other groups, like self-employed people. We will use data from the new Planning and Preparing for Later Life survey alongside a range of existing data sources as part of this analytical work.

**We are committed to working with providers, the wider industry, the Pensions Regulator, and the Money and Pensions Service** to understand how and where they can use better communications and specific messaging to support women to plan and save for greater security in retirement.

**We are introducing a new voluntary Investing in Women Code.** This aims to increase the transparency of funding allocated to female entrepreneurs and expose the gender gap in investment.

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## **8. We need to ensure we have the right foundations for the future**

We want to sustain our robust and world-leading legislative framework and public services that support women. We will work across government to ensure that protecting and advancing equality is at the forefront of preparing for the future.

**2020 marks 50 years since the introduction of the Equal Pay Act 1970.** We will review the enforcement of equal pay legislation to ensure it is working as effectively as possible, including considering the circumstances where mandatory equal pay audits could be appropriate and proportionate.

**Alongside any measures which we take forward following our analysis of the consultation on redundancy protection and pregnancy and maternity discrimination,** we will set up a taskforce of employer and other groups to consider further steps and take action to tackle the workplace culture that allows pregnancy and maternity discrimination to persist.

**We are launching a consultation to help ensure workplace sexual harassment legislation is fit for purpose.** This will include consulting on whether to extend the 3 month time limit for employment tribunal claims after any incident of harassment or discrimination. We will also run a nationally representative survey gathering information on sexual harassment both inside and outside the workplace.



“  
**We are launching a consultation to help ensure workplace sexual harassment legislation is fit for purpose**  
”

Alongside this, we are supporting the Equality and Human Rights Commission's development of technical guidance on sexual harassment and harassment at work, which will be published later this year and form the basis of a statutory code of practice.

**We will build the evidence base on what works to improve women's reproductive health**, across the life-course, from puberty to menopause, working with Public Health England on the delivery of their reproductive health action plan. We will develop indicators relating to women's health experience and impact on their work.

In the LGBT Action Plan, the Government committed to a range of action on improving the health of LGBT people and the provision of service. Ensuring the specific needs of lesbians and bi-women is a core part of this.

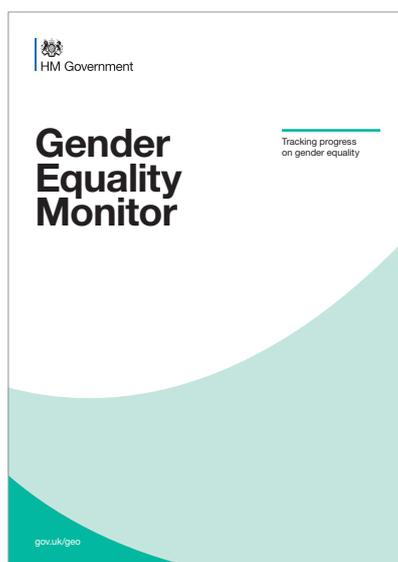
**Alongside this roadmap, we are publishing a Gender Equality Monitor** which brings together a suite of metrics from across government to monitor important gender equality issues in the UK.

This is a first release and we will continue to engage with stakeholders to understand which measures are important, providing the basis to expand to a broader set of metrics in the future. In particular we will further explore spending and decision-making at the household level, intersectionality and portrayal of gender in advertising. We will build an interactive tool to make the data more accessible, to be launched next year.

## Next steps

This roadmap builds on good work already done by this government and others. It sets out further activity and ambition. But we must go further to shift the dial on women's economic empowerment and close the national gender pay gap. We will continue to drive forward this agenda through delivery of other flagship government initiatives, such as the Industrial Strategy. From the Government Equalities Office's new home in the Cabinet Office, we will do more to understand how different protected characteristics and disadvantages intersect and help turn government work into more than the sum of its parts. This includes joining forces with the Disability Unit, in the new Equalities Hub at the Cabinet Office, to understand the particular barriers faced by disabled people, and how gender affects this.

Commitments in this roadmap will be absorbed into departments' 2020/21 single departmental plans as necessary, but we will also provide an annual progress report to Parliament, alongside annual reporting against the Gender Equality Monitor, to ensure we continue to respond to emerging issues, level up, and create true gender equality.



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